

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 183684

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION WITH INDIA ON DISPOSAL OF STOCKPILED
OPIUM

REF: NEW DELHI 10621; STATE 177257

1. APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S COMMENTS. YOUR PARAS 1 THROUGH 4
GENERALLY PARALLEL OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT SENSITIVITY OF CON-
SROL ISSUE, AND FORMED THE BACKDROP AGAINST WHICH WE SOUGHT
TO LEAVE IT OUT OF THIS PRESENTATION. THERE REMAINS,
HOWEVER, CONSIDERABLE CONCERN IN WASHINGTON ABOUT DIVERSION
AND THE POTENTIAL ROLE IT MIGHT PLAY IN THE FUTURE IN
RELATION TO US PROBLEM. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT
PLAN TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN RAISING IT IN STOCKPILE CONTEXT.

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2. WE DO NOT CONSIDER MENTION OF POPPY STRAW AS POTENTIAL SOURCE OF ALKALOIDS EQUIVALENT TO POSSESSING THE ISSUE WITH THE INDIANS. YOU ARE PROBABLY AWARE THAT US FIRMS WERE UNABLE TO OBTAIN THIS SEASON AS MUCH OPIUM AS THEY DESIRED, AND HAVE DISCUSSED MATTER IN TERMS WHICH HAVE AROUSED PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE SHORTAGE. STOCKPILE RELEASES ARE CLEARLY A TEMPORARY METHOD OF MAKING UP ANY SHORTFALL. SINCE ACCEPTABLE CHEMICAL SUBSTITUTES SEEM SOME DISTANCE AWAY, IT IS INCUMBENT UPON US

TO SEEK ADEQUATE ALKALOID SUPPLIES WITHOUT REPEAT WITHOUT UNDERCUTTING OUR BROAD PROGRAMS FOR ELIMINATING ILLICIT CULTIVATION AND PREVENTING ILLEGAL DIVERSION FROM LEGAL CULTIVATION.

3. WE UNDERSTAND DUTCH ARE CONTRACTING WITH INDIA FOR SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS STRAW FOR COMMERCIAL PROCESSING, AND THAT CONSIDERABLY MORE MIGHT BE AVAILABLE. MALLINCKROD REPRESENTATIVE GERFEN (STATE 180495) INTENDS EXPLORE SUBJECT DURING HIS VISIT IN INDIA. WHILE WE HOPE REAL INITIAL TIVES CAN BE LEFT LARGELY TO PRIVATE INTERESTS WE THINK IT ESSENTIAL TO SHOW SOME SPECIFIC RESPONSE USG IS MAKING TO CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE LONG TERM SHORTAGES. UTILIZATION OF HITHERTO WASTED RESOURCE WOULD NOT ADD TO ENFORCEMENT PROBLEM IN WAY EXPANDING AREAS OF POPPY GROWING WOULD, BUT IT COULD SUBSTANTIALLY SUPPLEMENT ALKALOID AVAILABILITY.

4. WE DO NOT REPEAT NOT CONTEMPLATE AT THIS POINT URGING DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN PROCESSING FACILITY (WHICH WOULD REQUIRE US POLICY DECISION), BUT WE WISH ASCERTAIN INDIAN THOUGHTS ON SUBJECT, AND PARTICULARLY ASSESSMENT OF PROBLEMS AND CAPABILITIES FOR COLLECTING MORE STRAW FOR EXPORT SALE. WE PLAN THEREFORE TO MENTION MATTER AS OUTLINED REFTTEL. FYI, WE WILL PROBABLY BE MAKING OTHER PARALLEL EFFORTS TO BECOME BETTER INFORMED ON POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL ALKALOIDS IN PREPARATION FOR CND DISCUSSION.

5. SOME MINOR REVISIONS IN TEXT OF PAPER ARE BEING
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DRAFTED FINAL VERSION WILL BE CABLED ASAP. WE HOPE
SCHEDULE DISCUSSION HERE EARLY NEXT WEEK. RUSH

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